

Speak Lord, For Your Servant Hears

Joe Slater

I should know that voice on the phone, but I'm not certain whose it is! Do you ever have the same problem? What if God called, and you didn't recognize His voice? In a manner of speaking, that happened to Samuel. God called him (not on the phone!), but Samuel first thought it was Eli calling. Eli had to instruct the lad in the proper way to answer God's call: "*Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears*" (1 Samuel 3:9, 10). We parents must make it a point to help our children "hear" the call of God through the gospel, and know how to answer it through faith and obedience.

Once Samuel understood Who was calling him and how to respond, he was true to his word in hearing (heeding, obeying) the divine message. He didn't just say it, he meant it: "*Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.*"

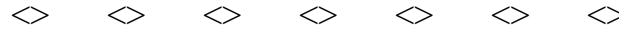
God gave young Samuel an uncomfortable and difficult message: Eli's sons were corrupt, Eli had not restrained them, and God was more than a little fed up with the whole situation. Terrible judgment would come upon Eli's household, and there was no remedy. Not even sacrifice and offering would atone (1 Samuel 3:11-14). Though Samuel was afraid, with Eli's encouragement he made known what God had said (vv. 14-18).

Like Samuel, we must do more than merely say we will obey God. Remember Jesus' parable of the two sons (Matthew 21:28-32). One said he would obey his father, but did not; the other said he would not, but then repented and did his father's will. Just saying something is not the equivalent of doing it!

Even when the task is difficult or uncomfortable, we are responsible to do as our Lord directs, to do so promptly, and to serve Him with our full strength.

Prosperity and freedom have cursed us with the attitude that we don't have to do anything unless it suits us. In direct contrast to such self-will, Samuel acknowledged that he was the Lord's servant. True servants don't pick and choose which of the Master's orders they will obey!

Jesus pointed out the inconsistency of calling Him "Lord" while not doing what He says (Luke 6:46). Can you honestly say, "*Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears*"?



A Real Saint!

Two brothers had terrorized a small town for decades; they were unfaithful to their wives, abusive to their children, and dishonest in business.

The younger brother died unexpectedly. His surviving brother went to the preacher of the local church. "I'd like you to conduct my brother's funeral," he said, "but it's important to me that during the service, you tell everyone my brother was a saint."

"But he was far from that," the minister countered. The wealthy man pulled out his checkbook. "I'm prepared to give \$100,000 to the church. All I'm asking is that you publicly state that my brother was a saint."

On the day of the funeral, the preacher began his eulogy: "Everyone here knows that the deceased was a wicked man, a womanizer, and a drunk. He terrorized his employees and cheated on his taxes." The minister paused. "But as evil and sinful as this man was, compared to his older brother, he was a saint!"

Greg Asimakopolous (via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart)

They "Cracked the Code" to Happiness

The Mayo Clinic has been studying for decades this question: "What makes people happy?" Why does the Mayo Clinic care? Because happy people seem to be healthier.

Anyway, after decades of research, hundreds of thousands of participants, dozens of studies . . . they finally have cracked the code. Here it is: Happiness is a decision. In other words, being happy is not dependent on external circumstances, but what you focus on.

Are we constantly complaining? If so, we will be very unhappy . . . period. But if we focus on the positive side of life . . . and most importantly, concentrate on helping others rather than dwelling on self-pity, we will be happier people. The Mayo Clinic's research also reveals that happiness depends a great deal on how "resilient people are to life's many curve balls. Happy people are very good at compartmentalizing and creating boundaries" (Source: newyork.cbslocal.com).

In other words, don't let disruptions in one part of your life bleed over into the family, for example. "If you've had a difficult day, when you get back home, for the first three minutes forget about it, park it, and meet your family as if they were long lost friends," said one researcher.

Then this: Perhaps the biggest hindrance of all to being happy is thinking too much about one's self, the research shows. Of course, there is nothing new under the sun. Happiness was defined long ago in the Ancient Text. Serve God, serve your fellow man. Jesus' recipe in Matthew chapters 5-7 ("Sermon on the Mount") has yet to be improved upon by modern research . . . though it is often confirmed.

Jared Jackson (via Christian Courier; adapted)